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## **GLORIA MOLINA ANNOUNCES FOSTER YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAM'S SUCCESSES EXPANDED COUNTYWIDE**

### **School-Based Care Model Pioneered in San Gabriel Valley Schools**

LOS ANGELES (October 30, 2012)—Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina announced today that the successful foster youth education pilot program has officially been institutionalized and expanded countywide.

The pilot program's new approach was pioneered in a joint effort between Molina's office; various San Gabriel Valley school districts; the county's Dept. of Children and Family Services (DCFS); the county's Chief Executive Office; Casey Family Programs; and the L.A County Education Coordination Council.

"When we began this pilot program years ago, our goal was simply to reverse our high school drop-out rates among our foster youth by developing a solid education plan to address each child's unique need – then requiring both county and school district staff to ensure actual implementation," Molina said. "Three years later, a total of 423 youth have participated in the program – and we enjoy an 80 percent high school graduation rate. Three seniors went directly to four-year universities and 38 more enrolled in community colleges."

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“Key to our success is our approach: It requires intense collaboration between DCFS social workers and school district staff,” Molina continued. “They meet regularly and work as a team to ensure that each child’s unique educational needs are assessed and addressed. Together, they check students’ grades weekly; secure tutoring sessions and transportation assistance; meet students’ summer school registration deadlines; schedule their SAT prep courses and exams well in advance; and plan college tours. They also ensure that any credits students earned at schools they previously attended are counted toward graduation. We are so pleased with the results, our approach is being institutionalized and expanded countywide.”

Conceived in 2008, the program was initially piloted in conjunction with the Pomona and Montebello Unified School Districts. Today, it also includes the Azusa Unified, El Rancho Unified, El Monte Union, Hacienda/La Puente Unified, and Los Angeles Unified School Districts.

In June 2009, 116 youth total participated in the program – and, of that number, 20 were seniors; 18 graduated high school; and 15 enrolled in community colleges. In June 2010, 132 youth total participated – and, of that number, 26 were seniors; 19 graduated high school; 12 enrolled in community colleges; and one went directly to a four-year university. In June 2011, 175 youth total participated – and, of that number, 23 were seniors; 18 graduated high school; 11 enrolled in community colleges; two went directly to a four-year university; and one enrolled in a vocational school.

The pilot program involved 12 non-case carrying DCFS social workers, each with a total caseload of 25 foster youth. Each social worker was co-located at various DCFS Regional Offices in or near schools attended by foster children whose cases they oversee so they could better complete individual educational assessments for each child under their supervision.

Social workers then utilized that data to craft individual educational case plans – in partnership with each child’s caregivers, biological parents, school personnel, and the youth themselves. Then, they painstakingly implemented each child’s case plan. Social workers also met monthly with school personnel to review systemic issues – such as equipment needs, accessing school records, or housing DCFS staff at various sites – and, separately, Molina’s office led monthly operations meetings with DCFS staff and representatives from all participating school districts to ensure communication between all parties.

Youth who are in foster care are widely considered to be among the most at-risk population in Los Angeles County – particularly when transitioning from foster care to adulthood. Data from the Los Angeles Unified School District indicates that students involved in the child welfare and probation systems perform lower than other students. At the senior high level on the California Standards Test (CST), 4 percent of the students involved in the child welfare system and 2.4 percent of students in the probation system scored proficient or advanced, compared to 9.8 percent districtwide. Less than half (42.1 percent) of students involved in the child welfare system have passed the English Language Arts section in the California High School Exit Exam – and 33.9 percent have passed the Math section.

The expansion of Molina’s foster youth education approach from a pilot to a countywide program entails placing DCFS social workers at 15 newly participating schools and Deputy Probation Officers at five of those schools, where they will provide tutoring, academic enrichment, credit recovery, and other support services. “Advancement through Opportunity and Knowledge, Inc.” – also known as the “Children Youth and Family Collaborative” (CYFC) – has been providing these academic remediation services to support the pilot through the “Investing in Innovation (i3)” federal grant awarded in 2011. Today’s motion – co-authored by Sup. Molina and Sup. Mark Ridley-Thomas – directed CYFC to expand their services to these 15 additional schools. Their motion passed unanimously on consent.

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